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August 21, 2013

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Chair, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee
State Capitol, Room 2136
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Rendon:

Thank you for inviting my input on the water bond. I am writing to comment on the principles of the Clean Drinking Water & Climate Change Response Act of 2014.

I applaud your efforts on this vital issue. As you know, there are no silver bullets. We cannot build or store our way to a sustainable water system and a menu of policies will be necessary to ensure that competing needs are met. With that in mind, I would like to ask that some portion of the bond be dedicated to agricultural water conservation.

The Department of Water Resources details conservation measures for both on-farm water conservation and irrigation district system improvements. We have funded those practices through previous water bonds and those programs have been oversubscribed. It makes sense to continue these efforts.

Agriculture accounts for 80% of developed water use in California. Because of this I feel strongly that conservation efforts, with a particular emphasis on agricultural conservation, need dedicated funding in the Act. We must build on conservation efforts by creating incentives for reducing net water use in ways that recognize water rights, but that also result in water savings that benefit the state as a whole. This could be administered through either the Regional Water Management Groups directly or through the Department of Water Resources or both.

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Conservation is a small but significant component for solving our water needs. Greater efficiency through conservation will improve our environment, enhance our ability to adapt to changing water availability, and return more water to the system.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss further the role that conservation can play as the Act develops in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marc Levine". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

MARC LEVINE
Assemblymember, 10th District

ML:ro